

# Press Release

November 12, 2019



**Erie Arts & Culture**  
*The collective voice for a vibrant region*

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## ABOUT ERIE ARTS & CULTURE

Founded in 1960 as the Arts Council of Erie, Erie Arts & Culture is the Local Arts Agency (LAA) for Northwest Pennsylvania, as appointed by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA). As an LAA, our role is to promote, support, and develop arts and culture at the regional level; ensuring broad opportunities for residents throughout communities in Erie, Crawford, Venango, Warren, Mercer, and Lawrence counties to engage with the sector educationally, socially, and economically. The presence of an LAA ensures that all communities - regardless of their geographic location or economic status - are systematically and equitably served.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ERIE ARTS & CULTURE WELCOMES CHANEL COOK AS THE DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS



Chanel will join the team at Erie Arts & Culture starting Monday, November 18.

In 2019, Erie Arts & Culture's Board of Trustees underwent the strategic planning process, led by Dr. Doug Borwick, the President of Not-for-Profit Vision and author of "Building Communities, Not Audiences: The Future of the Arts in the US." Diversity, equity, and inclusion and strengthening the relationship between Erie Arts & Culture and the community at large is a central focus of the agency's strategic plan. To align staff and resources with the plan, the former position of Programs Director was expanded to intentionally include a focus on community relationships.

Chanel has a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership from Mercyhurst University and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Gannon University, where she graduated Cum Laude. She is also a 2015 graduate of the Jefferson Educational Society's Civic Leadership Academy. With her, Chanel brings to Erie Arts & Culture 17 years of experience working for federal and local levels of government. From 2005 through 2011, Chanel worked for the United States House of Representatives as a District and Constituent Representative. From 2011 to 2019, Chanel held several roles with Erie County Government, including Refugee Health Manager, Public Information Officer, and the Manager of Outreach Services at the Erie County Public Library.

Chanel also has extensive experience serving as a Director of various non-profit Boards, including the Martin Luther King Center of Erie, Celebrate Erie, WQLN Public Media, and the United Way of Erie County. Prior to being hired as a staff member, Chanel served on Erie Arts & Culture's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force and has been involved with the agency's grantmaking program at the panel level. Recently, Chanel was also named to the Pennsylvania Humanities Council's Board of Directors, where she serves alongside Second Lady of Pennsylvania Gisele Barreto Fetterman.

Erie Arts and Culture is committed to improving the lives of our region's residents. We do this by leveraging the power of arts and culture to address the vital needs and interests of Erie and Northwest Pennsylvania. More than 60 individuals applied for the position of Director of Programs and Community Relationships, many of whom were from outside the Erie area. Chanel quickly rose to the top as a candidate given her education, work experience, skill set, and involvement in the community. In her role, Chanel will be responsible for overseeing both Erie Arts & Culture's state funded and privately funded programs and initiatives. She will work directly with Erie Arts & Culture's Executive Director to ensure that program resources are aligned with the agency's stated priorities and mission principle.

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